Mr. Fred DeVonney
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4/13/92

Dear Fred,

Glad to hear from you and to know that you are started. I'll probably be responding in odds and ends of moments of time.

As I think you know the thrust of my work is that all the basic institutions of our society failed in those times of great stress and since then. So I'm glad you've decided to study the major media for the first 20 days. And before I forget, Dave Wrone, Professor of History, Stevens Point, WI, 54481, is the coauthor of the only professional bibliography. Greenwood Press still has copies. Costly, too. And he also has the files of a former AP reporter friend who became a friend of the Wrone family, Jim White. He and his wife Jennifer get a Wisconsin fine set of clippings. Dave can tell you how good it is for the period of your interest. I know the Times is on microfilm. Jennifer mounted all the 25 boxes of clippings on paper. It includes also some NO copy and the San Francisco Bay area papers, among others I do not recall.

In trying to decide whether the pres's failures were deliberate you may want to recall some other catastrophes, like the Bay of Pigs, which both the Times and Post sat on and did not report at government request. There was no such request of which I know in the assassination. But there is much that should be reported and isn't. And while I'm rambling, expecting to be interrupted again, as I was twice since beginning this, a woman named Nancy Stone did a thesis at Boston perhaps of interest to you. She did not send me a copy. Wrone was going to try to get it. When he has it he can tell you.

When you can visit, fine. My schedule has changed more radically and I must be abed by seven. I have sleep apnea, get up too early, and the only chance I have to get 4-5 hours of sleep is to start early. One of the things it means is that part of the time when asleep I do not breathe. This means that I get up weakened and more tired than otherwise and it contributes to waking tiredness. I try to take a nap when I can.

LIFE as I recall printed six different version of the one in which they used the Zapruder film. The best source on this is Paul Hoch, 1525 Acton St., Berkeley, Ca 94702.

I've not seen that Village Voice story 3/31, and I'd appreciate a copy if you can please send me one. If it is what I think it is, please do this in your own interest. If it is what I think it is, I have reason to believe that, at least in major part it is unfair in the meaning it gives to what it reports.

When you are here I have a transcrupt of the Parkland Hospital doctors' press conference to announce death. At least twice and maybe more times then were quite explicit in saying that the neck wound was from the front. You may want to make a copy when you are here. So the papers knew it and I'm sure reported it and then let it drop dead and none that I recall ever remembered this when the Report was out. That was certainly a viable lead to

be followed at the time of the crime and ever since, particularly when the Report was out. But nobody did that and that is not easily regarded as an accidental error.

Now on the FBI and the press, I have several files that will be of interest to you, on the Post and the former Washington Star in particular. The latter is so good you may want to use it as an illustration even though it is of 1966. The Washington Post stuff is 11/25/63 re the Katzenbach memo I think I gave you. On my desk if I didn't.

When you are here I can tell you a couple of Times stories you will not be able to corroborate but I think will indicate to you what policy was and remained. To this day.

Another issue known immediately is that Hosty told Revill that they knew Oswald was capable and did not expect him to do anything. Not followed up, not even when Curry apologized for the truth. A genuine question then was why the FBI did not tell the local police that Oswald as living there. Or, had the FBI failed? I recall no followup or questioning stories. ...

Compare major media, like Life and the Zap. film, with what private people, like me, did, making things accessible rather than suppressing them, as it did with Zapruder's film.

With both the Times and the Post, in the sense of what LIFE did with the Zap film, I don't know how possible it would be for you to check the bulldog, first of any day's editions, against last copies but I think it would show that support of what officials were saying is apparent in changes made. ...

I have separate files for the Post and then Star and how the FBI used them.

And how it got the Post not to support creation of the presidential commission that Katz. recommended. and how fast news of that, not printed, got around.

The press seems to have done nothing to learn about and get access to amateur movies the taking of which was visible in pictures that were known to the press. ...

When we talk about the Times, remind me of Ho Waldron at the time of the crime and of Harrison Salisbury in 1966, Whitewash II. ...

A question you may want to consider, should it be possible for rich publications to be able to buy exclusive rights and then suppress evidence, as LIFE did with Zap's film? ...

Assuming you'll see both the Post and Times, what and how many stories did they carry that did not come from official sources. True also of news magazines. ...

You formulate, I think incorrectly, in saying that evidence of conspiracy was not uncovered until long after the assassination. The question should be suspicion of or reason to believe there may have been a conspiracy. However, there were immediate and obvious questions about the shooting: was it all from that window; why was it not as the motorcade approached on Houston St.; was it possible through those trees; how could all that shooting, including the immediately-known missed shot, have been done with that rifle in so short a time? The press knew this in general and LIFE had the Zap. film. ...

As I got into in Whitewash II there were immediate questions about the man in the doorway in the first picture used, Altgens'. Oswald was also photographed once arrested. Did

the press compare the shirts? Why not when it is this obvious? When it was said that that man was Lovelady, and I'm not sure this was public but I think it was, why did not the press ak to see the shirt he was wearing that day so it could be compared with the Altgens picture? I have some interesting pictures for you on this. This and I'm sure more that does not now come to mind reflects the fact that a diligent press had innumerable leads for checking what it had been told. I can't recall that it even asked for the autopsy results to be disclosed.

Your statement of what you now think your thesis statement will be is good.

We should, I think, also talk about DeLoach and what he did and how it is reflected in what was disclosed and how those records are hidden. I have some copies filed under DeLoach with separate files on the media and its personnel and I have some in my Ming working file under writers, but mostly later than the JFK offing. They do, however, reflect how the FBI worked to control the press. And used it for its own purposes, like O'Leary, then of the Star, later Epstein of the Star, this one to defend against the kind of things you will be assessing and reporting. ...

Wrone has my clippings, including the early Post but not the Times.

AP and NBC News published books on their early coverage. I think I still have them. They may well hold leads on what should have been followed up.

Have you considered carrying a small notebook in which you can note questions as they come to mind?

Did Oswald know that Abt had declined to represent him and that a Chicago lawyer named McPermid had telegraphed that he would? Telegram not in Oswald's possession and no note about Abt's refusal. But the police did disclose that the ACLU had asked to see him and did. Would history have been different if Oswald had had counsel?

Best,
Harold